MODERN SIDE-SADDLE RIDING

By
Eva Christy

Acquired 1979

The Gift of

Mrs Waller

HSMRBR Christy

Photo by [*Fall, 9, Baker Street, W.*

Fig. 1.—Near-side view of lady mounted.

MODERN SIDE-SADDLE RIDING

A Practical Handbook for Horsewomen

By EVA CHRISTY

THIRD EDITION REVISED

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE art of riding, with the details of its complete mastery, cannot easily be explained in writing. Yet, for the sake of ladies who desire to acquire it, and who may not be able to obtain good teaching from a competent lady teacher, I have endeavoured in this little manual to give distinct practical directions. These, I hope, may be clear to the reader with the help of photographs, which I have had taken expressly for the purpose.

I have abstained from enlarging upon the grooming, feeding, and stabling of the horse, the treatment and cure of vices, or the training of young horses. These branches of the subject are treated of in all the ordinary manuals of equitation. With the exception of Chapter IV and parts of Chapters V and VI, my book is exclusively for the *side-saddle* rider, and contains matter which is not to be found in the ordinary handbooks on riding.

Those ladies who live far from Town will perhaps be glad of the hints as to their outfit, for they may be compelled by circumstances to give directions to local tradesmen for its preparation.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. H. S. Wilton for lending stirrups, bridles, etc. It is also through his kindness that I have been able to obtain photographs of the most level and straight-seated saddle made—viz., that represented in Figs. 8 and 9.

I shall be glad to answer any inquiries directed to me, at my publishers' address.

E. C.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

In preparing this edition, I have made considerable alterations in the letter-press, and have also had a number of new photographs taken, in order that the work may be in every way thoroughly modern.

I am indebted to Messrs. Busvine and Co. for the habit represented in Figs. 29, 30, 36. That shown in Figs. 1, 31, 34, 35 is also of the same make.

E. C.

March, 1907.

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Modern Side-Saddle Riding.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

IT has been remarked that nowhere can finer horses be seen than in Hyde Park during the season. They are the admiration of our Continental visitors and the subject of frequent comment; but our critics aver that there are only a few really accomplished riders, especially among ladies.

The day has not yet come (though it is to be hoped it is not far distant) when we shall have obstacles arranged somewhere in the Park over which the riders may practise jumping. At present they ride up and down, the rider changing the pace from a walk to a trot or canter in monotonous repetition.

If some of the indifferent riders only knew what it is to be able to enjoy a good long trot or canter in quiet self-possession, with easy command of the horse and no uncomfortable loss of breath or shifting about in the saddle, what a revelation it would be to them! Unfortunately, many ladies, after a few minutes' trot, are quite uncomfortable, out of breath, and out of position. Only those who have really mastered the art can appreciate the keen and intense enjoyment of a good ride. The sense of freedom and the delight of rapid motion must be experienced to be understood.

There is no finer exercise than riding. It brings into play many of the best qualities of mind and body, gives suppleness and grace to the figure, beautifies the complexion, and invigorates the health.

A woman is said to look her best on horseback, and certainly, when well dressed and well mounted, her figure and carriage are seen to great advantage.

A good "horsewoman" and a good "rider" are terms which are frequently

confused. Horsemanship is the art of managing a horse: riding, the art of managing oneself when mounted on a horse. A lady may be a good horsewoman without being a graceful rider, but she cannot be a good horsewoman, in the true sense of the words, unless she be also a good rider.

Although there may be some ladies who never become graceful riders, even these can be taught to master the art very fairly, if pains are taken by the teacher as well as by the pupil. Everything worth learning costs time and effort.

A great deal is said about the desirability of beginning to ride when young. This may be advisable on many accounts. Confidence is gained gradually and the muscles are exercised while they are pliable. On the other hand, when the pupil is grown up she has the advantage of being able to put more intelligence into her lessons; her staying power is greater; and she is more likely to take pains to observe that the correct position is maintained, and that the muscles which she knows she ought to employ are being used. If a young pupil

has a tumble now and then, it is not an unmixed evil, for experience in falling is useful. Moreover, a young girl is less likely to be hurt than a grown-up person. Nevertheless, there are some excellent riders who never mounted a horse till past twenty years of age.

Although there are few women as yet who ride astride in this country, a little girl may be put thus on a pony, and led about carefully at a walking pace; and, until she reaches about the age of nine or ten years, she should not be expected to sit on a side-saddle. A soft pad, made especially for the purpose, should be used, and her feet should rest in toe-stirrups (see pages 41, 42), in which they cannot be pushed up to the insteps. In this way, a child will derive great pleasure from her rides, and will at the same time be gaining confidence without contracting bad habits.

When a girl has grown too old for this position, she may use a side-saddle and be taught in the same way as an adult, with one exception, which is a very important one: she must be taught more gradually

and gently. Her pony, when trotting, must be allowed to take its natural pace, and not be made to keep up with the teacher's horse. This is a point often neglected ; the child is left to rise as best she can ; and she is bumped about unmercifully. In this way, many children acquire a dislike to horse exercise.

It will be well for all those who intend to take lessons to be exceedingly careful in the selection of their teacher, for bad habits are very quickly acquired and are found extremely difficult to get rid of.

It is very important that girls should be taught riding by a competent lady who has herself experienced and overcome the difficulties of the side-saddle. There are various points which would not be appreciated by a man and the pupil could not discuss with him, although they are essential to her comfort. Although many excellent riding-masters are to be found in London and elsewhere, the number of those who are competent to give lessons in *side-saddle* riding is limited. There was an idea prevalent at one time that riding for both sexes could only be taught by men, but this

has been exploded. A man's seat, astride his horse, with equal action for both his legs, and with his knees free from pommel or leaping-head, cannot be compared in any way with a lady's seat. Although the management of the horse may be practically the same in both cases, the deportment of the body is entirely different.

Obviously no one can teach an art which he has not himself acquired; and very few men have gone to the trouble of learning to sit well in a side-saddle, and to master the various paces of the horse creditably in it.

No undue strain is put on a lady's physical strength in teaching riding, for the well-trained and tractable horses which a teacher would select for her pupils are under perfect and easy control. Of course, she must be able to ride easily, without giving thought to herself or her horse, so as to give all her attention to the pupil. She must also thoroughly understand the mechanism of the bridle, the position of the saddle, adjustment of girths, and other details. She need not necessarily be called upon to use her strength in buckling them, but she must be able to

direct the groom who mounts her and her pupils, and ascertain for herself whether he has done his work efficiently.

Stiffness after each lesson is not unavoidable. It is generally felt on the next day, or sometimes on the second, and arises from the pupil having attempted too much, and laid too much stress on some one special point. It can usually be avoided by a change of strain from one set of muscles to another, which will lessen the fatigue and make the lesson more useful as well as more enjoyable.

The surest way to contract bad habits is to continue riding when the muscles are exhausted. It is rarely advisable for the lessons to be of more than one hour's duration at first. Although the pupil may feel quite fresh and eager to go on at the end of that time, she should not, as a rule, be allowed to do so.

CHAPTER II.

The Saddle, Saddle-cloth, and Girths.

IT is of the first importance that a lady's saddle should fit not only the horse, but also the rider; for it is impossible to ride in comfort on one that is not adapted to the limbs.

Buying a Saddle.

In purchasing a saddle, the most satisfactory plan is to go to a good firm and have one specially made to measure. A side-saddle has to be fashioned with great care and skill, and it is difficult to obtain a ready-made one that meets all the requirements of each case. The advice of an experienced horsewoman, if available, is of great service in detecting the good or bad points, and in indicating how errors of construction may be rectified. Faults which do not appear at first, soon make themselves felt after a few trials, causing

Photo by] [*Hilliard.*

Fig. 2.—Off-side view of lady mounted.

inconvenience and pain both to horse and rider.

Do not purchase a saddle without trying it on the "dummy," if not on the living animal, and mount in skirt and breeches.

Seat and Position of Limbs.

Sit in the centre of the seat, the right knee round the pommel, and the foot drawn back so that the lower part of the leg lies straight down upon the flap of the saddle which covers part of the left shoulder of the horse, the leg thus being bent at a right angle. The left leg should then be pressed up beneath the curved crutch or "leaping-head" (a screw pommel), so that the knee fits comfortably under it and lies close against the flap of the saddle. This leaping-head ought to be screwed firmly in its place, the end inclined downward and a little backward. It should be noticed that the screw is made to turn in the opposite direction to an ordinary one—viz., from right to left. If this becomes loose, a washer or small ring of leather should be used in order that it may be at the correct slant for the knee when screwed up to the full: otherwise, it may chafe the knee and be most uncomfortable.

Position of Shoulders.

When comfortably settled in the middle of the saddle, sit as upright as possible, looking straight between the horse's ears, the shoulders square. Viewed from behind. the rider should appear exactly in the centre, her spine precisely over the spine of her mount (Fig. 3).

Position of Feet.

Put half the sole of the left foot in the stirrup (see page 32), and adjust the stirrup-leather so that the bottom of the boot is parallel with the ground when the knee is pressed under the leaping-head. Keep the legs laid close to the horse, the toe of the right foot turned a little to the right and downwards, so that the foot lies as flat as possible against the horse's shoulder, the left foot inclined inwards. Notice in Fig. 4 the right heel is very near the left shin, and the right calf and left knee almost touch. It is important that the right leg should be hooked back, for the pushing forward of the right foot straightens the knee, and so prevents it from being able to grip, as it should do, round the pommel.

When the rider has been careful to follow these directions, she must note the following :

Photo by] [*Hilliard.*

Fig. 3.—Back view of lady mounted.

Firstly, care should be taken that the seat of the saddle is long enough. When the right leg is in position and the knee is hooked closely round the pommel, the "cantle," or back edge of the seat, should project one or one and a-half inches (Fig. 4), so that a line drawn straight down from behind the rider's shoulders would just meet it. Some ladies prefer a saddle with a slight dip in the seat, and others one with a seat comparatively level. This is a matter of choice, but in any case the saddle must be long enough. If only a trifle too short, the rider will find after a certain time she has a blister, which will soon rub into an open sore. The horse's back is often chafed in this way; for, long before the rider feels discomfort, the fact of her sitting so near the end of her saddle makes it press down upon him, and his back becomes tender after a short ride, and after a longer one a piece of skin will often be rubbed off (see pages 24, 29, 35, 73). Another evil of having the seat too short is that, to sit comfortably down in it, one is pushed so far forward that the left knee is thrust too much to the front, and the right loses its close grip round the pommel.

Length and Shape of Seat of Saddle.

Sore Back.

Position of Pommel. Secondly, see that the pommel (when the right knee is hooked closely round it) is in such a position that the line from knee to thigh is parallel with the horse's spine. Some years ago all saddles were made with the pommel so far to the left that the rider was obliged to sit askew. The modern saddle, however, enables the rider to be balanced well in the centre of her horse's back. It must be remembered that the position of a pommel which may be in the right place for a rider who is very stout, will not be in the correct position for another who is thin. It is natural that a very broad leg will require more room than a narrow or thin one, and so the rider who is mounted on a saddle made for a broad leg will necessarily find that her knee does not lie directly above the centre of the horse's back, because the pommel is too far to the left.

Position of Leaping-head. Thirdly, see that the leaping-head is in the correct place for the left knee. The leaping-head and pommel should not be placed too near one another. There are a few saddlers (and I am glad to say only a few) who make the mistake of placing the

[Photos by

Fig. 4.—Correct position of legs and feet in the saddle.

[*Fellows Willson*, 118, *New Bond Street*.

Fig. 5.—Bad position of both legs and both feet in saddle.

leaping-head too high, viz., close up against the pommel. Upon a saddle of this kind it is well nigh impossible for anyone of average height to obtain a firm grip. The stirrup-leather must not be shortened in order to bring the knee up to a leaping-head placed in this position: on the contrary, the leaping-head should be lowered to suit the knee.

Let us take, for example, a rider of, say, five feet six inches (one whose limbs are of ordinary proportions) and weighing about ten stone, to be the average. As it is of the first importance to consider the length of the thigh, it is obvious that should a lady be exceptionally tall or exceptionally short, her height (as far as it concerns her saddle) must be judged entirely by the length from knee to hip. Our average rider, therefore, will require the leaping-head and pommel to be two to two and a-half inches apart at their base (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 13). For a short figure, it will be necessary to have them a little nearer, and for a small child nearer still.

When the stirrup-leather has been adjusted to the correct length already given,

the angle of the knee beneath the leaping-head should not project in front of it more than a couple of inches, for the pressure should neither be upon the knee-cap, nor on the soft part of the leg, but on the firm muscles just above the knee (Fig. 4). The leaping-head should be curved downwards and backwards in such a manner that when pressure is against it the knee is inclined inwards against the side of the horse, and not outwards.

It is a good plan to have a strap buckled across from point to point of the pommels, in order to prevent any unnecessary risk of the habit catching thereon in the event of a fall (Figs. 30, 35). The distance between the points of the two is generally about nine inches, and, as before stated, between the base of them fully two inches. The usual breadth of the pommel and leaping-head (measured at the base) is about three and three-quarter inches, but, if preferred, can be made seven or even eight inches wide.

Some ladies (especially those who are stout) experience discomfort inside the angle of the right knee, where the pressure is on

Photo by] [*Fellows Willson*, 118, *New Bond Street.*

Fig. 6.—Saddle (Near Side).

the front edge of the pommel. This is now easily avoided, for when required the front edge of the pommel can be curved downwards for two or three inches, so as to fit the bend of the knee. This can be fixed stationary, as on the ordinary saddle, or else by a strong steel pin (Figs. 30, 34). This pin forms a pivot on which the pommel turns slightly, but it can be adjusted with a key to the required position comfortable to each rider using the saddle.

If a saddle is to be used by two people who are not the same height, order one in which there are two, or perhaps three, holes for the leaping-head, so that it may be screwed into one or the other as may be required.

Although the leaping-head and pommel should be quite long enough, care should be taken that they are not too long, or they will spoil the hang of the skirt. The average height for the pommel is about five and a-half inches, and for the leaping-head eight and a-half inches.

Cut-back Saddle-tree.

The iron framework, or tree, of the saddle is now always cut away a few inches in

the centre of the front, leaving a narrow breech beneath the right knee. This opening may be covered with a leather flap or not, as preferred (see the old-fashioned tree in Figs. 13, 21, and the modern in Figs. 7, 8). This latter style has several advantages over the old. It allows of the saddle being made more easily to fit the horse, and also of better ventilation ; and it enables the rider to have her knee on a level with her body.

Fit of Saddle to Horse.

Special attention should be given to the adaptation of the saddle to the horse. In case of the rider having her own horse, the saddler should take his measurements in order that the saddle shall fit over the withers or shoulder-bones as perfectly as possible. The two iron arms (which, although covered by the stuffing of the saddle, can easily be felt at each side of the front of the underneath part) should be sufficiently wide apart to prevent their pressing down upon the horse unnecessarily tightly. On the other hand, they should not be so far apart as to allow the saddle to shift about from side to side.

Sore Back.

Many ladies' horses have suffered extremely

Fig. 7.—Saddle (Off-side).

Fig. 8.—Saddle with cut back tree
(Off side).

from this, especially on the "off" side* It therefore behoves all who ride to see that they do not inflict unnecessary pain on these most long-suffering animals (see pages 19, 29, 35, 73).

Position of Saddle on Horse.

The position of the saddle is often the cause of tenderness of the withers, for it is frequently put on by ignorant grooms (and often by people who ought to know better) much too forward. The true position of a side-saddle is for the arms of the tree to be well behind the withers, allowing them full play.

Saddle-cloth or Numnah.

For those who wish to use their saddles for various horses of different build, a numnah or saddle-cloth ought to be kept. A side-saddle will not fit horses of different sizes so easily as a man's saddle. A saddle made to fit a well-bred horse of sixteen "hands"† will be found useful for average work, and, with a saddle-cloth, may be adapted to

* The terms *right* and *left* are not used with regard to a horse and his equipments. The reader will find the matter in this book much simplified if she will remember that when the "*off*" side is spoken of the *right* is meant, and when the "*near*" is mentioned it is the *left* side.

† One hand equals four inches.

horses with narrower withers: but this should only be used when required, and not put on beneath every saddle indiscriminately, with the idea of preventing the chance of a sore back. With very few exceptions, it is not needed beneath a properly-fitting saddle.

The saddle-cloth may be made of soft, pliable leather, such as is used for bridles, or of a piece of good felt. It is generally cut the same shape as the saddle, and about an inch larger all round (Figs. 2, 9). When a leather one is preferred, care should be taken that it is washed free from sweat after use, and that it is never allowed to harden. A preparation termed "dubbin" (obtainable in tins) should be used for keeping it soft. Dubbin should always be applied while the leather is damp. It should be well rubbed in, left for a few moments, and then removed before use. In cases where the horse's skin is exceptionally tender, it is well to have a sponge-lined saddle-cloth. This is made either of bridle leather or felt, and lined with a soft pad of Turkey sponge at the withers or at the back, or both, as required. A first-class maker

Photo by] [*Spalding.*

Fig. 9.—Numnah beneath saddle, showing its fastening.

says: "These sponge-lined numnahs will not answer unless the sponge is thoroughly cleansed from sweat each time it is used. The best method of cleaning is thoroughly to wet the sponge lining after use with another sponge, and then press the water and sweat out with an empty wine bottle used as a roller. The sponge on the numnah should be slightly damped before use."

Position of Saddle-cloth.

A saddle-cloth is always placed exactly beneath the saddle, and should have straps attached to each side just long enough to buckle over the arms of the saddle, viz.: beneath the outer flaps, and where the girths are buckled. These keep it in position (see Fig. 9). It must be remembered that a thick saddle-cloth will fill up the room between the arms of the tree, and if used when a saddle is a close fit, the back of the horse will be pinched by the weight of the rider.

Girthing of Saddle.

A side-saddle should always be girthed more tightly than that of a man. A thoughtful groom will always put it on and girth it up a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes before required, as a horse sometimes "blows out" his body when being saddled. The

girths can be tightened on the off side when the horse is ready to be brought out of the stable, or, better still, directly the rider is mounted, the horse's body then, if he have the habit mentioned, being reduced. The groom will do well to remember to buckle up the girths high on the near (left) side when first the saddle is put on, so that there may be a sufficient number of holes left on the off side for the second tightening. Grooms frequently forget this, and, finding there are not sufficient holes left to tighten up properly when the lady is mounted, they let her go with the saddle far too loose, rather than admit their fault and ask her to dismount. Although a well-balanced rider will not find it at all difficult to rise to the trot of a quiet horse while going straight ahead with loose girths, or even with no girths at all, it is exceedingly dangerous to attempt to hunt or to ride even the most docile animal unless the girths are properly tightened. In neglecting this, the rider runs every risk of being thrown, owing to her saddle twisting round, should the horse swerve suddenly to one side.

Photos by]

Fig. 10.—A pair of Webbing Girths.

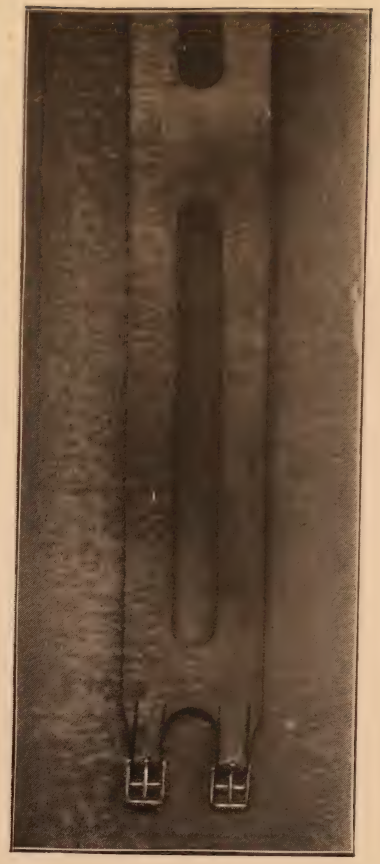
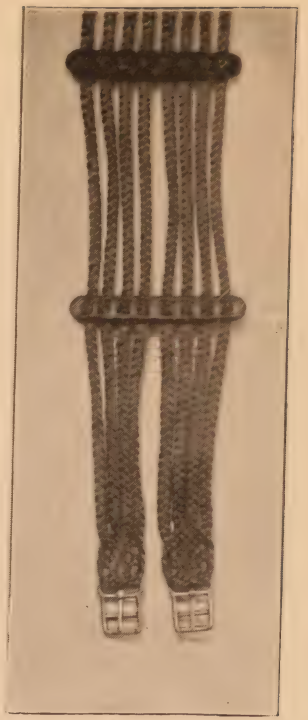


Fig. 11.—A ventilated-leather Girth.



[*Fellows Willson, 118, New Bond St.*

Fig. 12.—A raw-hide Girth.

Sore Back.

Although the looseness of the saddle may perhaps be quite unnoticed by the rider, there is also a danger that the constant friction of it upon the horse's back may cause a sore (see pages 19, 24, 35, 73).

Balance-Girth.

Saddles should have a leather surcingle on the off side, slanting backward so as to buckle on the side of the seat (Figs. 7, 8). This, commonly known as the balance-girth, is a valuable addition, and helps to keep the seat firm. Some ladies prefer to have the stirrup attached to this, instead of making use of it as a balance girth; but this is mentioned more fully on page 44.

Doe-Skin Seat.

Ladies' saddles are occasionally covered with doe-skin on the seat and the inside of the pummel and leaping-head. This is a matter of choice; it is soft, and not so slippery as the ordinary pig-skin.

Pocket.

A small pocket is usually put on the off side of the saddle. This should be cut in the upper part of the side flap, and not stitched on to it, as in the saddles of a few years ago. If thus made it will be neither bulky nor conspicuous.

For hunting or country riding of any

kind, two little rings or D's, stitched about six inches apart, between the stuffing and seat of the saddle on the off side, will be found very useful to carry a mackintosh or sandwich-box (Fig. 29, page 99).

Girths. A pair of flat webbing girths, each about four inches wide (Fig. 10), are most frequently used. Some prefer the raw-hide girth, which is made of plaited gut (Fig. 12), and others the ventilated-leather girth (Fig. 11). Either of the latter may be used alone, as they have two buckles and are as broad as a pair of the webbing girths.

Off-side Saddle v. Near-side Saddle. A few years ago, when a twisted seat was the usual thing, it was thought necessary for growing girls to ride occasionally on a saddle made for the off side of the horse instead of the near, as there seemed a chance of slight spinal curvature after riding constantly on the same side; but little or nothing is heard of this difficulty now that the straight seat is universal. For those who have spinal delicacy, or who for some special reason may be ordered by their doctor to ride on the off side, a saddle can easily be obtained so made, or a reversible one which will do for either.

Photo by] [*Ashby.*

Fig. 13.—Position of Saddle when laid on the ground.

Girths.

Off-s
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Near
Sadd

CHAPTER III.

Stirrups.

IT is very important to give particular attention to the position of the left foot in the stirrup.

Old style Saddle v. Modern.

Some few years ago, ladies' saddles were made with two fixed pommels, one on the off and one on the near side of the front, between which the right knee rested. There then existed no leaping-head, the left knee lying quite free against the flap of the saddle. In this way, almost all the grip obtainable was with the right leg; and the left having no crutch against which it could press upwards, the foot was always carried "home" when the plain iron stirrup was used—viz., so far in that the top of the stirrup touched the instep, and the bottom was against the inside of the heel—in fact, as far in as it would go.

Gradually this style of saddle has been improved. The leaping-head has now come into use, and as it has done so, the pommel on the off side of the right knee has disappeared. A great change has also come over the position of the foot in the stirrup. A leaping-head now being provided for the left knee, only the toe of the foot is put in the stirrup, so that the flat iron tread or foot-plate at the bottom comes barely beyond the broad part of the sole of the boot (Fig. 4, see page 18).

Position of Foot in Stirrup.

There is a great tendency among ladies to ride with too long a stirrup-leather. This is a very bad practice, as the heel has to be raised to obtain pressure against the crutch, and the foot of an unaccomplished rider is then apt to slip "home," as in Fig. 5. It is, on the contrary, always allowable to carry the heel slightly depressed. When carried thus, a very firm grip can be obtained between toe and knee by the muscles of the instep, which can be tightened and relaxed at will, and become very strong with constant use. The action of these muscles is most essential to all those who wish to have a firm and

Use of Leaping-head and Stirrup.

correct seat, and it is by pressing upwards from the toe at a critical moment that many a bad fall has been prevented by those who otherwise sit too loosely in the saddle. This pressure to a large extent keeps the left thigh down in the seat, thus holding steady a large portion of the body.

The cause of most (or, in fact, nearly all) of the dragging accidents, which have taken place owing to the foot becoming caught in the stirrup, is that it has been pushed too far in. It is *most essential* that the knee be always carried well up against the leaping-head and pressed close against the saddle (see pages 17, 18), or the seat will be very insecure. If at the same time the foot were carried "home," the lower limb would then be firmly wedged between leaping-head and stirrup, and the rider being entirely deprived of the use of the instep muscles, no grip upwards could be obtained. Should such a rider be dragged, she must not complain that the stirrup is at fault, but remedy the matter by learning to carry her foot correctly; for the old saying that "only a bad workman complains of his tools" applies equally to women.

Beginners frequently make the mistake of pressing downwards in the stirrup. This should on no account be allowed. It must be remembered that a woman *never rises from* her stirrup. Although there must be a certain amount of pressure downwards to keep the toe in position, the pressure upwards is much the stronger of the two.

It is painful to see little girls sent out with the family coachman to be taught to ride. The coachman may be a good horseman, able to sit in his own saddle well, but it should not be expected that he can know how a rider should deport herself on a side-saddle. The very points on which he knows nothing from experience are those which are essential to the comfort and safety of a young lady. Among many very bad faults, we may mention as a serious one that of allowing the little pupil to almost stand in her stirrup in order to rise to her pony's trot. She is, therefore, quite unable to rise straight and square, but with each rise she goes from side to side with one shoulder higher than the other in a most distorted manner. Such habits once acquired are

difficult to correct, and their evils need hardly be enlarged upon.

Sore Back.

This is a very frequent way of causing a sore on the horse's back; for when the stirrup is used thus the saddle is pulled over to the near side, and the horse must have a very thick skin if, with that constant shifting, he does not acquire a sore of some kind. Only too many cases are to be heard of in which a piece of skin has been taken off a few inches to the off side of the back, leaving a raw wound the size of a five-shilling piece. This has often occurred when the saddle has been a perfect fit, which is generally a proof that the fault lies with the rider alone (see pages 19, 24, 29, 73).

Drawing back of Left leg.

It should not be forgotten that the knee must always touch the leaping-head, and that, when it is well up against it, the stirrup-leather hangs quite straight down, and the lower part of the leg nearly straight (Fig. 4). (See pages 17, 18.) It should never be drawn further back than a very slight pendulous movement, which is unavoidable when the horse is trotting or cantering; but this should not be exaggerated.

A drawing back of the left leg, as in Fig. 9, is a habit which beginners are very apt to fall into, especially when cantering, and one which is often allowed by those teachers who are careless or ignorant.

Riding without Stirrup.

After the learner has mastered the position of the foot in the plain iron stirrup, she should practice freeing the foot entirely, and then replacing it in the correct position in the stirrup without the aid of the hand. With practise it will be found not at all difficult for the rider to be able, while keeping the knee well up to the leaping-head and the toe slightly elevated, to swing the lower part of the leg back out of the stirrup and then forward into it again. Every rider should be able to trot and canter as evenly and well without the stirrup as with it; for, should the foot at any time escape from the stirrup, the fact should in no way impede the rider's progress. If, for instance, when following hounds, a lady were obliged to pull up her horse and use her hand to replace the foot in the stirrup, she would in all probability find that she had lost the best part of the run by the

time she was ready to go on again. She should be able to ride without it, until, by a pendulous action of the lower leg, she finds she can put the foot correctly in position.

Safety Stirrups.

There have been several kinds of so-called "safety" stirrups put before the public, with the object of making it easy to release the foot in case of accident. Sad to say, these stirrups have been to some degree a snare to unaccomplished riders; for quite as many dragging accidents have occurred to those using them as to those using a plain iron stirrup. They were invented to lessen the chance of an accident by dragging; but many ladies will admit (if they are quite honest with themselves) that they prefer to ride with them chiefly because they save the trouble of learning to keep the foot in its proper position. They imagine themselves quite safe with the foot pushed tightly in as far as it will go, because they feel sure the stirrup will fly open and release it if needful. This is a most dangerous reliance. There have been many cases where, after a safety stirrup has been in use for some time, the

spring has got out of order, through want of attention on the part of the groom, and it has failed to act at the critical moment. The stirrup is then no better than the ordinary iron one—in fact, it is far worse, because the rider has belief in its spring and relies upon it. Then, again, nearly all these so-called "safety" spring stirrups fly open *on one side only*, and should the foot be put in from the wrong side they will not act (see page 41). Surely, therefore, it is better to learn to keep the foot in its proper position, so that one is safe with any kind of stirrup, instead of depending on the action of a spring for security.

Latchford Stirrup.

The Latchford stirrup (Fig. 14) consists of a large and small iron, each complete in itself and shaped like an ordinary stirrup. The smaller or inner stirrup is detachable. The mechanism is so arranged that should the foot become wedged into this when the rider falls from the saddle, the foot-plate of the larger one, to which the stirrup-leather is attached, partially revolves, and the inner stirrup becomes detached.

One objection to this stirrup is the fact

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OPEN. SHUT.

Fig. 14.—Latchford Stirrup.

[*Fellows Willson*, 118, *New Bond Street*.

OPEN. SHUT.

Fig. 15.– Cope Stirrup.

that it will only act when the foot is put in from the correct side. Both sides being equally comfortable, it is difficult for the rider, without a close examination, to distinguish which is the right one. Another objection is that, when the stirrup has been used for some time, the parts frequently become loose, and then a very slight pressure on the foot-plate in any other manner than straight downward causes the inner stirrup to fall out when there is no necessity for it. It may be lost in the hunting-field or trampled in the mud, and much time may be lost by a fruitless search for it.

Cope Stirrup.

The Cope stirrup (Fig. 15) has also the appearance of two stirrups, large and small, one inside the other. The outer one is complete, but the inner is merely a bow without a foot-plate of its own. The two parts do not entirely separate, as they do in the Latchford; but, should the foot when fixed tightly in the inner bow be pulled sideways, the common foot-plate becomes unhooked at one side, falls down from a hinge, and so the boot is liberated.

This, again, only acts when the foot is

put in from one side, and frequently comes unhooked when not required.

Scott Stirrup.

The Scott stirrup (Fig. 16) appears to be formed, in like manner, of two stirrups. The outer one is complete: the inner, which is only a bow or hoop, is divided in the centre. When the foot-plate revolves, the two halves, while still remaining attached to the outer stirrup, are made to fly apart outwards and set free the foot.

This is a more useful stirrup, but it does not always act when required, and it occasionally opens when least expected. It is usually made to act on one side only, but has lately been improved, and can be procured to open both ways equally well.

Spring-Side Stirrup.

The Spring-side stirrup (Fig. 17) is exactly like a plain iron, except for a spring at one side of the bow. It is supposed to free the foot when pressure is put upon its side, but is not always to be relied on, as frequently the pressure of the foot may be upon the plain side, when the spring does not act. This stirrup is, then, to all intents and purposes, no safer than a plain iron one.

Photos by]

SHUT. OPEN.

Fig. 16.—Scott Stirrup.

[*Fellows Willson*, 118, *New Bond Street*.

OPEN. SHUT.

Fig. 17.—Spring-side Stirrup.

It should be noticed that in most cases the tread or foot-plate of these stirrups is not oval, as in the case of an ordinary man's iron, but it is nearly straight on one side and rounded on the other. The foot should always be put in by way of the straight side, and every groom should be taught to distinguish which is which.

Christy Stirrup.

The Christy stirrup (Fig. 18) is formed of a metal cage or hood. The foot-plate, instead of being a narrow bar, as in all those before mentioned, is sufficiently long for the entire tread of the sole of the boot in front of its broadest part to rest completely upon it, thereby giving extra support. The foot is prevented from slipping too far in by the bands which rise up from the foot-plate round the toe and at the sides, joining together at the top of the bow. This seems to be the only stirrup on the market which always hangs on the saddle in the position in which it is used. The slot for the reception of the leather is made fore and aft instead of from side to side; the bow of the stirrup, therefore, hangs out at right angles to the horse instead of flat against his

side. The rider is, therefore, able to put her foot in and out of it easily, without the difficulty usually experienced.

The bars or bands are not far enough apart to allow of even a child's boot becoming permanently wedged between them in case of a fall. It also hangs tilted in such a manner that the foot has not the usual tendency to slip out, and so will always be found in position during the roughest riding.

Those ladies who have trouble in preventing an ordinary stirrup from slipping up to the instep will do well to use this. It is perfectly safe for hunting, and has advantages over all the "safeties" before mentioned, in that there are no hooks or projections on which the skirt might catch when leaving the saddle, and that there are no springs to get out of order.

Slipper Stirrup.

The old-fashioned Slipper Stirrup may be said to have gone out of use when the leaping-head became general on saddles.

Safety Stirrup-Leather Bar.

There are several different kinds of stirrup-leather bars made with the object of lessening the chance of a rider being dragged along by her foot after a fall. It will

Fig. 18. – Christy Stirrup.

Fig. 19.—Safety Stirrup-leather Bar.

suffice, however, to describe one of them. On the Wilton Safety Stirrup-leather Bar (Fig. 19) the leather on which the stirrup hangs is attached to the saddle, not by being buckled over the ordinary roller, but by a spring bar, held down and covered by a long, stiff leather flap. When the rider is in the saddle, this flap lies flat beneath the legs, holding the spring beneath it shut, and so keeps the leather firm (Fig. 4). Should she be thrown with the foot caught, the slightest pull upon the stirrup will cause the spring to fly open and release the leather. The rider's legs having left the saddle, there is nothing to keep down the leather flap which covers the spring bar : therefore the stirrup and leather fall away from the saddle all in one.

This seems never to have failed to act when required, and any kind of stirrup may be used on it. With it, is usually sold a small leather pouch, to be carried fastened at the side of the saddle, containing a very light stirrup and a piece of webbing, instead of leather, to be used in case the ordinary one is lost.

Leather Padding on Stirrups.

No leather padding of any kind should be put inside the stirrup, for it is most dangerous. Nothing clings more tightly to the boot than the soft doe-skin shield which used to be sold by saddlers who knew nothing of riding.

Off-side Single Stirrup-Leather.

Old-fashioned saddles have the stirrups stitched on to one long leather which goes over the roller beneath the left knee, under the horse's body, and buckles on to the leather to which the balance-girth (see page 29) is generally fastened, viz., that which hangs at the back of the off side of the seat.

When this single-strap, or off-side stirrup-leather is used, the arrangement is by no means satisfactory, for the girth then ceases to be one which can be buckled to the necessary tightness in order that the saddle may be kept quite secure. It can, on the contrary, only be tightened according to the required length of the stirrup. Another objection to it is that although the stirrup may have been the correct length when starting, it will be found after a while to be too long.

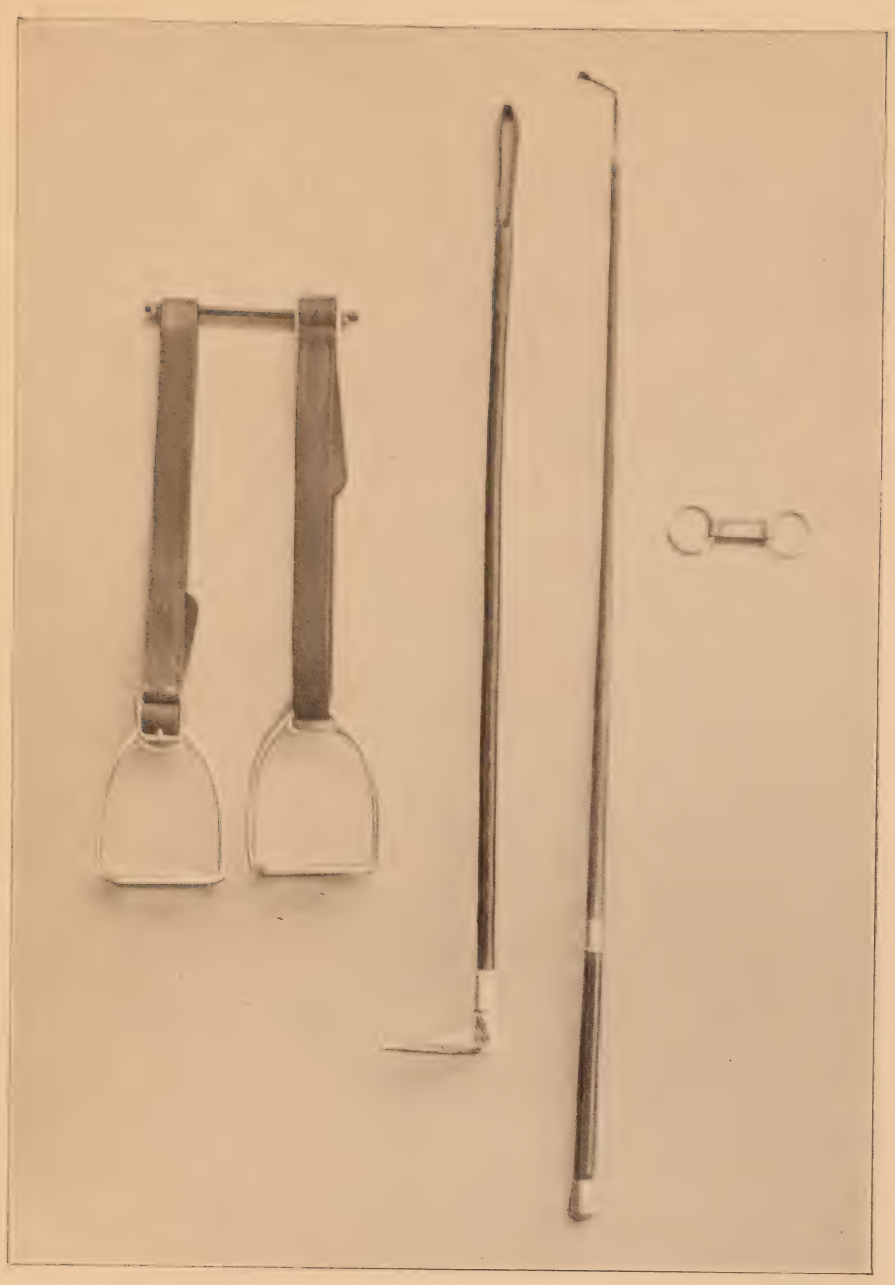

Photo by] [*Spalding.*

A B C D E

Fig. 20.—A.—Stirrup-leather with buckle at the bottom. B.—Stirrup-leather with buckle at the top. C.—Hunting-crop. D.—Cutting Whip. E.—Martingale Rings.

Near-side Double Stirrup-Leather.

The double-strap, or near-side, stirrup-leather is the best, and is most frequently used nowadays. It consists of a plain strap, twenty-four to twenty-six inches in length, with buckle, and is generally one and one-eighth inch broad. There are two ways of adjusting this: sometimes the end is put first through the stirrup, then upwards round the roller, and the buckle made to lie at the top (see Fig. 20B). Unless the saddle be made with a proper recess in which the buckle can lie, this will cause a lump which will hurt the inside of the knee and prevent the rider using her limb properly. The more satisfactory way is to put the end first round the roller (pushed in from above), then downwards through the stirrup, and buckle it so that the buckle lies at the bottom against the stirrup (see Fig. 20A).

In both cases, the buckle lies outside, but in the latter the length can be altered more easily by the rider in the saddle.

The waste end of leather should always be pushed through that portion of the buckle made on purpose for it, so that it will lie flat with the rest, and not flap about.

CHAPTER IV.

The Bridle, Reins, and Martingale.

The Bit and Bridle.

THE double bit and bridle generally used for riding consists of two bits entirely separate (viz., the snaffle and the curb), each of them attached to a leather cheek-strap. These two straps lie together down the sides of the horse's face, and are kept in place behind his ears by the brow-piece across the forehead, and also by a small strap at the neck, called the throat-latch.

Curb and Snaffle.

One pair of reins is attached to each bit. Those of the snaffle, or guiding bit, which is the smaller of the two and has a hinged mouthpiece, are uppermost. Those attached to the larger and more complicated bit, with a stiff mouthpiece, called the curb, are sometimes slightly narrower.

The curb has not a simple ring on each

Photo by] [*Hilliard.*

Fig. 21.—Single Bridle.

side of the mouthpiece, to which also the cheek-strap and reins are attached, as in the case of the snaffle, but is made with cross-bars, commonly called cheek-pieces, having a ring at each end and the lower parts longer than the upper. To the upper ring on each side, the foremost cheek-straps are attached, and to the lower rings, the lower pair of reins. A small hook hangs from each of the uppermost rings, and to these the curb-chain is hung. The position of this chain is shown in Fig. 22. It lies beneath the horse's chin, outside the snaffle bit. The harder the lower, or curb, reins are pulled, the tighter becomes the chain, and the tighter the lower jaw is nipped. The length of the curb-chain can be altered by hooking or unhooking a link or two as required on either side. When the cross-bars of the curb lie at the angle shown in Fig. 22, the chain will lie easily against the chin, as it should do. If tighter than this, it is apt to work upwards when the reins are pulled, when the chin will be nipped too high up, and is likely, therefore, to become sore and cause the horse to fidget. When fastened looser than this,

Curb-Chain.

the leverage will be entirely lost, and the chain may fall down over the lip into the mouth.

The links of the chain are made to lie evenly together, forming a flat, smooth surface, in order not to chafe the horse's skin. Although they fall irregularly when not in use, they can be made to lie flat by a few twists. In cases where the horse has a very hard mouth, it is permissible to use the chain with the links irregularly twisted.

Some riders prefer to have the curb and snaffle bits in one. The Pelham bit is thus arranged. It is like the curb bit before mentioned, but instead of there being a snaffle bit in addition, an extra ring for the snaffle reins is affixed to each side of the one mouthpiece (Figs. 6, 23). This bit is made with either a stiff or a hinged mouthpiece. The former is preferable. Not more than one cheek-strap is needed when this is used, and the chain lies beneath the snaffle ring.

Lip-Strap. Some use a lip strap (Fig. 23) to keep the chain in place. This is a very narrow strap which goes round the chin as does

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Fig. 22.—Double Bridle.

[*Fall, 9, Baker Street, W.*

Fig. 23.—Pelham Bit and Bridle.

the chain. Each end is buckled to a small ring which may be observed in the middle of each of the lower halves of the cheek pieces. Before being buckled, it is slipped through one loose ring, which will be found to lie apart from the others in the centre of the curb-chain. This strap may be put on either of the before-mentioned bits; it will also frustrate a tiresome habit some horses have of biting one of the cheek-pieces.

A lady's horse is not usually considered completely equipped without the double bridle, but a single one, consisting of one bit, the snaffle, is simpler (Fig. 21). This is sometimes used for hunting, and for horses which do not like a curb bit; also for young horses. It is, or should be, used by those who are inexperienced and have not acquired the art of managing a horse, so that his mouth may not be injured.

A beginner will do well to remember that the snaffle is the guiding bit and the curb the emergency bit only.

Only the throat-latch should be unbuckled when the bridle is taken off: the rest will be

found to slip easily over the ears, when the bits come easily out of the mouth.

It is a matter of taste how the bits are attached to the bridle. Stitching is most popular (Fig. 23), though some prefer buckles as in Fig. 22; but several other kinds of fastenings are to be obtained, which are none the less satisfactory because at present they are a little uncommon.

Nose-Band.

A nose-band may be used or not as preferred. Many consider that it adds smartness to the bridle, but some horses look better without it (see Fig. 22 with it, and Fig. 9 without it).

The forelock is usually allowed to lie outside the brow-piece, and the throat-latch is never buckled up tightly.

The cheek-straps should be sufficiently long to allow the bits to lie comfortably in the mouth—not so low that there is any chance of their coming out, yet not so high that the corners of the mouth are wrinkled by them.

Gathering up Single Reins.

The reins ought to be soft and pliable. During ordinary riding, they should be held in the left hand and the whip in the

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Fig. 24.—Hand holding single pair of reins.

[*Fellows Willson, 118, New Bond Street.*

Fig. 25.—Hand holding double pair of reins.

right. To hold them correctly, the rider must close the fist over them, so that the superfluous ends which form loops lie out over the thumb, between it and the first finger. When using a single pair, the left snaffle rein lies outside the little finger, and the right comes from between the first and second fingers (Fig. 24).

Gathering up Double Reins.

The curb reins, when held with those of the snaffle, must come through the fingers between those of the snaffle (Fig. 25), the left rein between third and fourth fingers, and right rein between second and third, the loop ends lying with the others out over the thumb.

A great deal of practice is sometimes needed before the fingers learn to act properly in holding the reins.

An easy and quick way of gathering up the four reins correctly at starting is to take hold of the buckle in the middle of the top pair (snaffle) with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. Hold it up clear of the lower pair (curb), which must then be taken up at the stitching or buckle with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand. Lay the

buckle of the top pair over the stitching of the lower pair and hold both firmly edgeways between thumb and finger of the right hand, and all four will then be seen to lie evenly down in the direction of the horse's mouth. The left hand should then be laid over them, a finger being put down between each, the little finger between first and second, the third finger between second and third, the middle finger between third and fourth, the thumb being kept down all the while, so that, when the fist is clasped, the two loops come out, as before mentioned, between thumb and first finger.

Use and Management of Reins.

The rider must learn to guide her horse without assistance from her right hand. This, with practice, is easily done by the pressure of the required fingers, assisted by a movement of the hand from the wrist, the arm being kept in one position. She must not be content till she has learnt to manage her fingers so as to pull each pair of reins separately. To pull the snaffle pair alone, tighten the pressure of the little finger against the palm of the hand, thereby holding

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Fig. 26.—Hands holding reins for a young or awkward horse.

[*Fellows Willson, 118, New Bond Street.*

Fig. 27.—Hands holding reins for run-away horse.

firmly the left snaffle rein, and press the first and second fingers together so as to hold the right snaffle rein. In this way the two are pulled evenly. At the same time, slightly loosen the grip of the middle fingers, so that the curb reins slip lightly through. Do not open the fingers in doing this, but only loosen them, so that they are able to tighten again directly afterwards. The curb reins alone can be pulled in something the same manner: the second, third, and little fingers must be pressed tightly against each other while the others are slightly loosened.

Although the left hand alone may be used for holding the reins when trotting, both hands should always be put on them when cantering or jumping. When using both hands, the fingers of the right are put on the two right reins, while the whip is held pressed against the palm. It is a matter of taste how this is done.

When taking up the reins sufficiently tight to feel the horse's mouth gently, the hand should be about eight inches from the body of the rider. It should be kept as low as

possible, but not resting upon the knee when the horse is in motion.

The rider should get into the habit of always keeping the curb reins slightly looser than the snaffle.

When wishing to take the reins in the right hand, she must put it a few inches in advance of the left, and grasp the reins in the same manner before letting go with the left.

To shorten the reins while held by the left hand without the aid of the right is not a difficult matter for an accomplished horsewoman, by the working of the fingers and thumb; but if it is necessary to shorten them quickly, grasp them in a bunch behind with the right, and pull them gently through the fingers of the left till as short as required.

When cantering, the horse will not keep his head in one position: he stretches it forward and draws it back with each bound. He must not feel that he is pulling against fixed hands when he does this. They must have a yielding give-and-take movement from the elbow as well as the wrist, so that the rider

feels the mouth with exactly the same gentle pressure whether the horse's head is stretched out or is in its natural position. This movement is sometimes exaggerated, so that the whole body and arms work backwards and forwards in the most unnecessary and ungraceful manner. The reins must not be allowed to slip through the fingers during this give-and-take movement : they must be held firmly.

Communication between Horse and Rider.

Almost every variation of pace and temper is communicated by the bit to the rider's hand, if she knows how to feel it, before it can be felt by her body. A good horsewoman keeps up direct intercourse between her hand and her horse's mouth, and receives warning when her horse shies, starts, or stumbles, or takes it into his head to kick up his heels in play. She has every advantage over the rider who keeps her hands in a fixed position.

Reins when Riding a Young Horse.

Very little can be done till the rider has obtained the confidence of her mount. When riding a young horse with a single bridle, the reins are sometimes held one in each hand (Fig. 26). Each rein is grasped

by the whole hand from the outside, so that a rein comes out of the hand beneath each little finger. The hands are held apart, so that the rider can lower them to the level of the horse's shoulders, and so keep him in hand and turn him about more easily.

Reins when Riding a Runaway Horse.

When endeavouring to stop a runaway horse, a good purchase may be obtained if the rider will take up the reins in the same manner as when riding a young horse and twist each once round the hand (Fig. 27). To do this, take them up as described and keep the thumbs tightly closed, open out the fingers flat and point them down and outwards beneath the rein ; then bring them round and upwards back into their former position, so that the rein is wrapped round the four fingers and lies double across the palm. When the fist is closed the reins will come out from under the little fingers as before. When double reins are held in this manner, they should be grasped together and treated as if single.

For those who wish to use a single bridle, and yet do not feel that they have sufficien

grip with only one pair of reins, an extra rein may be put into the ring. These may be held either as single or double, according to preference (Fig. 21).

The Martingale.

A running martingale is often put on those horses which have an unpleasant habit of throwing up their heads. It is formed of a strap, which is furnished at one end with a loop, through which the girth is passed. The strap passes between the fore legs and up the chest, where it divides into two. On the end of each of these branch straps is a ring, through which the snaffle rein is passed on either side. The long strap will be seen to be kept in place by another fastened round the neck at the shoulders, and sometimes held back by two little straps to D's on the front of the saddle. When this is put on a double bridle, the curb reins should hang free outside the martingale (Figs. 6, 9).

A standing martingale is sometimes used for quiet riding. In this, the branches of the chest strap, instead of ending in rings, have buckles, and are fastened on to the rings of the snaffle bit on each side. This is not a safe

kind for cross-country riding, as the horse's head has not sufficient play in case of a fall.

In place of a martingale, many people have both snaffle reins passed through a ring either of ivory or leather beneath the horse's chin (Fig. 20E). This will prevent the horse throwing up his head too high.

CHAPTER V.

Miscellanea.

A Word to Beginners.

TRY to secure a quiet horse on which to learn—one which can be made to trot or canter at a word or with a slight touch from the whip, and will steadily and evenly keep up the desired pace until you wish to alter it. Do not begin to rise until he begins to trot, and cease the instant he has broken into a canter or fallen into a walk.

Never sit bolt upright on horseback, or you will have a very stiff and "unworkmanlike" appearance. Incline slightly forward, but not so much so as to stoop and become round-shouldered.

A trot and a canter should always be tried without a stirrup, and so practised until an observer cannot tell whether the rider has her foot in rest or not. This is particularly

necessary for those who have a tendency to press too much downwards in the stirrup, but should on no account be tried for more than a few moments at a time, for it is exceedingly tiring, the left leg having to be held up unsupported against the leaping-head all the while; for it must not be allowed to droop when practising without a stirrup. When, owing to fatigue, the leg can no longer be pressed up against the leaping-head in its proper position, replace it in the stirrup. Never attempt to rise with it hanging straight down; it will pull the body out of position, a bad habit will be contracted, and you may acquire a crooked and uncertain seat.

Trotting. Presuming the rider to be sitting correctly in her saddle as described on pages 17, 18, the rise to the trot of her horse should be accomplished, not by pressure down upon the stirrup, as is supposed by the uninitiated, but entirely by the muscles of the right leg. It is very important to remember that the weight of the body should be wholly upon the right leg and thigh, otherwise the weight will not be exactly in the centre of the horse's back.

When beginning to trot, remember to press *upwards* with the left knee, so as to maintain a steady seat, and then, to every alternate step of the horse, rise slightly from the saddle by pressure of the right knee, rising up with one step and going down with the other. The rise should be done smoothly, and without a jerk, to avoid the awkwardness of coming down with a bump each time. The action is a shifting of the weight from thigh to knee, and, when done properly, is almost a rocking movement from back to front.

A beginner must expect at first to endure some discomfort from being shaken rather unpleasantly. She should try to keep herself square and steady in the saddle, making no attempt at first to rise while the horse trots, and not allow herself to be shaken out of position, either sideways or forward. Riding is largely a question of balance, and no one can ride properly till it is attained. When a lady has accomplished this, she may try the rise, taking care that she does not change her position as she does so.

Many ladies who sit well in the saddle

when the horse is walking and cantering have a tendency to become twisted and get out of position when trotting. Special care should be taken that the right foot is kept down and held back as flat as possible against the flap of the saddle, and the right shoulder also down and back.

The elbows should not be stuck out, nor should they be kept quite close to the sides. They should be carried easily, with the upper arm almost straight down and the elbow about three inches away from the waist.

There are some horses on which the rider may rise with equal comfort either to his near (left) or off (right) leg, and there are others on which the motion is distinctly different. Only experience will enable the rider to distinguish which is the more comfortable movement. In rising to the off leg of her horse, she must be up on the right knee when the horse's off knee is up at its highest point, and sit down when his near foot is on the ground. She can then sit quite square and rise straight to his trot. The rider must be careful not to get into

the uncomfortable habit of a double rise and fall to each of his steps. Riders who sit too loosely are apt to fall into this error. It can be avoided by taking a firmer grip of the knees and rising more deliberately and carefully.

Cantering and Galloping.

When cantering, the same position is maintained in the saddle as when the horse is walking. Do not attempt any rise, but sit firmly down; take a good grip with the knees, inclining them towards each other; keep the right foot back and the lower part of the left leg as straight down as possible (see pages 17, 18). Both hands should hold the reins (see page 53). Never canter on a hard road or down hill, if it can be avoided.

A well-trained horse leads with his off foreleg when cantering. The difference in comfort to the rider between the off or near leg is more noticeable in some horses than in others. He can be taught to lead with his off leg by being cantered round in a circle to the right.

The motion of the gallop, as far as the rider is concerned, is very much the same as the canter; but, being much faster, it requires firmer grip.

Sometimes, when the horse first breaks from a canter to a gallop, beginners have the idea that he is running away with them, and become frightened. This should be guarded against, for the horse is probably heartily enjoying himself and means no mischief. Possibly he may try to put down his head and kick up his heels when excited by a gallop. This merely affords good practice for the rider, and the hint is given in order that she may not be taken entirely by surprise.

Change of Pace.

It will be noticed that some horses, when required to change their pace, yield to a movement of the hand or a word; some need a touch of the whip; a slow or lazy horse may even require the spur.

The Spur.

The latter cannot be used properly by a side-saddle rider, owing to the fixed position of the left knee and the shortness of the stirrup-leather. It cannot be applied at right angles to the horse's body in the correct manner, unless the left knee be brought out of position—viz., away from the side of the saddle. It is obvious that this would make the rider's seat very insecure. The lady who

uses a spur must do so therefore in a sparing and gentle manner, or she will soon make a sore place on her horse's side. Spurs made especially for ladies can be obtained, the spikes being guarded by a spring sheath to prevent them catching in the skirt.

The whip should be held in the right hand and used upon the horse just behind the saddle. The most usual kind of whip is that which is commonly known as the hunting-crop. This is a stick (Fig. 20C), generally of cane or cherry and about two feet long, with a handle of buck's horn put on at right angles. A handle of this shape will be found very useful in the country for opening gates. On the other end is a loop of leather, to which a lash can be attached. It should be held about six inches from the end with the handle downwards (Fig. 2). **The Whip.**

The cutting whip (Fig. 20D), which is generally used for young horses, and sometimes for town riding, is made of thin cane or whalebone. Being more flexible, it inflicts severer punishment than the hard crop. It is occasionally seen in the Park, but is not

so common as formerly. It is held with the point downwards.

Management of Horse's Mouth.

Turning now to consider the position of the hands and mode of handling the reins, we may observe that, if the rider wishes to bring her mount from a canter to a trot or from a trot to a walk, she must not pull up too suddenly, but draw the reins gradually tighter till he falls into the pace required. Keep the hands low and do not unnecessarily jerk his mouth, or it will soon be spoilt. When going up hill, let the reins be slack; but, when going down, feel the mouth firmly but gently, giving the horse a sense of support. Many a horse has been brought home with broken knees through carelessness on this point.

When turning the horse, it is quite impossible for him to know what he is to do unless the stress on the rein is continued till he has done what is required. It, therefore, must be gently pulled until he has turned sufficiently, and not let fall into its normal position until he faces the direction in which he is to go. Some riders have a bad habit of keeping up a constant irritating pull at both reins indiscriminately. This

kind of thing is extremely worrying to the horse, and one must not be surprised if what he does under such circumstances is contrary to the rider's wishes, or if, becoming almost distracted, he gives up in despair, and goes his own way and pace in spite of her. A lady who behaves thus can have no influence over her horse. The habit of jerking at the mouth anyhow and at any time is often contracted by those beginners who are allowed to have the management of the reins far too soon. A good teacher will show the pupil her seat before allowing her the guiding and management of the horse, or she will have too much to attend to at once, and so, while trying to attain a good seat, correct position, and graceful rise, she may contract the habit of almost holding herself on by the reins.

"Bad hands" are the cause of half the hard mouths, and no one can become a good horsewoman in the technical sense who has not "good hands."

Never think you can ride till you have been on several different horses and given each of them a good trial; for, although you

may have managed one well and mastered all his paces, you are by no means proficient till you can ride *any* well-trained horse. It is one thing to be able to sit well on horseback at a walk, and quite another to be able to sit various horses in all their different movements. Horses vary both in pace and action; and, if you are used to one only, you may quite lose your nerve if, when mounted on another, he makes some sudden movement that the last one never caused you to think of. The characters and tempers of horses differ widely; and, although you may have found that you could master the reins on your first mount, the next may want entirely different handling. This is a point in which many fail. They do not think enough of the importance of the hands; and many beginners are allowed to pull about the quiet old horse on which they are learning, and then they wonder why, when mounted on another, with a sensitive mouth, they can do nothing with him, and he takes to rearing and fidgeting about, becoming almost unmanageable.

Pulling. Some horses pull against the reins in a

very unpleasant way. If a mount has contracted this habit, it is of no avail to pull against him: it does little good and only tires the rider. She should try to make him alter his pace by her voice, if possible. If he will not yield to such guidance, a good plan is to have several different kinds of bits, and change them often, so that the horse never gets thoroughly used to any one. A curb bit with the cheek-pieces as long as possible will be found the most powerful. Or the curb chain may be twisted (see page 48), but this should only be done as a last resource, for the mouth soon becomes hardened to it.

Stumbling.

When the horse stumbles, the natural instinct is to hold him up by the reins, and this has prevented many a horse from getting broken knees. Pull him the instant he makes a false step, and before he has time to go down. This little timely support from the rider will often just save him.

Horses stumble for many reasons—sometimes because they are too heavily shod; sometimes because they are tired; or even because they are simply careless or drowsy.

In the latter case, they should have a gentle reminder in the shape of slight punishment from the whip, to let them know that they must be more alert. Of course, one must be carefully on the look out for stumbling when riding an old horse, and all horses must be well looked after in this respect when they are tired.

Shying. The nervousness of a beginner often communicates itself to her horse, and makes him start and become frightened at some trifling object in his path, when he probably would not have noticed it had he been alone. While she is anxiously trying to get him past quietly, fearing he will shy, she unconsciously tightens the hold on the reins, instead of holding them as usual, and he at once thinks there is danger, and involuntarily swerves away from it. If she is nervous, she should by all means keep that fact from his knowledge. He will feel instantly by the mouth if the rider gives him the least indication of timidity, and, if he be also of a timid disposition, will become the more easily agitated. If, on the contrary, he is playful, or even vicious, on finding his rider is

nervous, it is quite likely that he will take advantage and try to put her off. She should be calm and brave herself, and she will impart quietness and courage to her horse.

Should the horse object to passing something in the road of which he is afraid, pat him and encourage him by the voice, but *never* hit him. Do not turn back, or even allow him to be led past, unless as a last resource, or if obliged to hasten, for it may take some time to overcome his fears. Coax him near to the object of his dislike, and let him see and understand what it is; he will then in all probability be much less nervous next time he sees it, and very soon will get over his fear.

Running Away.

That the rider may be in some degree prepared for emergencies, "forewarned and forearmed," a few practical hints will now be given on what to do if the horse should take fright and bolt. Sit firmly and squarely in the saddle as usual. Above everything, do not lose presence of mind. Keep cool and speak to the horse—unless the voice betrays too much nervousness, in which case it will be better to be silent. Nothing

will quiet his fears more than a steady, reassuring voice. Do not try to stop him by a continuous pull on the reins, but take them up short, as in Fig. 27 (see pages 55, 56), give them a sudden strong pull, and "*saw*" the bit from side to side in his mouth by pulling first the right rein and then the left quickly until he slackens his speed. If the first sharp pull and sawing motion has no effect, let him have his head loose a moment, and then try again with a series of jerks and saws.

Although usually it is from fright that a horse breaks away at an alarming speed in this manner, it is not always so, and the rider must judge what has caused him to bolt. If it arise from viciousness, or a desire to get rid of his rider, she will do well, if she has nerve and, above all, determination and staying power, to make up her mind to a long gallop (that is, if she knows the way is free from obstacles), and let him go, guiding his progress in order to avoid sharp corners, and if possible towards an uphill path. She should let him go till he tires ; and, when he gives in and slackens his speed, should

urge him then with the whip, on and on, till he has had more than enough.

Though this is said to be one of the best means of teaching him not to try it again, it is not always practicable.

Some horses have a bad habit of rearing. **Rearing.** The only thing for the rider to do is to lean as far forward as possible, separate the hands on the reins, and lower them one on each side of the horse's shoulders. On no account pull his mouth upward or lean back. When he comes down again on his fore-legs be on the alert that he does not kick up behind. This is often done by those horses which have reared with the hope of unseating the rider.

Horses often kick if the saddle is not **Kicking.** quite comfortable, and this can easily be remedied. If, however, it is an acquired habit, the rider must keep her horse's head high and strike him on the shoulder instead of the flank, taking care that she does not get thrown too far forward in her saddle.

For the speedy curing of a sore made by **Cure of Sore Backs.** a saddle on a horse's back, rest from saddle

work is essential, until the sore has become thoroughly healed. Some put on vaseline if the skin is broken, but fuller's earth is much better.

Hints: Various and Sundry.

It is well for the rider to learn to saddle and bridle her horse, in order that she may know the meaning of each buckle and the adjustment of every strap, and can therefore at once detect any error or omission.

When riding with a friend, the rider should not let her horse walk or trot in front or a little behind, but keep him level with her companion's mount, making him go her pace and not his own.

When mounting a fresh horse, always make inquiries about him, as to whether he has any peculiarities.

Never lose temper with a horse ; for many a good animal turns stubborn and will not obey if the rider loses self-control. Some will retaliate by a display of viciousness. It has been truly said that an angry word will raise a horse's pulse to an extraordinary degree. He has a very keen ear for what is conveyed by the tone of the voice and manner of speaking.

Always start steadily. An old proverb says "Go slowly for the first and the last mile." But, if the rider finds her horse very fresh at starting, it is not always wise to keep him back. If she has an opportunity, while holding him well in hand, she might let him stretch his legs on the greensward in a gallop for a few minutes, and he will probably go more smoothly afterwards. He may, when he feels his feet on soft ground, want to plunge about or kick up his heels awhile to let off steam. She must be careful, therefore, that he does not get out of hand and master her.

If riding over very rough ground, it is often best to let the horse pick his own way. He will probably choose it better than his rider can do it for him, unless he is young and inexperienced.

When going a long ride, take care to notice if a shoe comes off. If you have lost one and have far to go, on a hard road, stop at the nearest forge and have another put on, or you will probably lame your horse. If you have only a short journey, walk him home quietly on the softest part of the road.

Rule of the Road.

The rule of the road for riding is the same as for driving, viz., always keep to the left, unless you wish to pass anything which is going in front of you, in which case go round it on the right. Remember the old saying:

> The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
> Without any reason or rhyme;
> If you go to the left, you're sure to be right;
> If you go to the right, you're wrong.

Exception is made to this rule in the case of a led horse. When meeting or passing such, never go by on that side on which is the unmounted horse. Always go the side of the person who is leading it; for, having no rider to control its hind-quarters on that side, it may kick out at you.

When leading a horse, whether you are riding another or walking, you should be on its near side, and have hold of the bridle with the right hand. The rule for you is always to keep to the right side of the road—in other words, to keep the animal next to the footway, and so out of the way of carts and other horses.

Opening and Closing Gates.

The opening of gates when on horse-back is not, as a rule, difficult to accomplish if your horse is quiet; and you should know how to accomplish this in case of necessity. Whichever way the gate is made to open, walk your horse close up to the centre of it: pull him round to face the fastening, so that his body is close alongside; then go forward till your hand or stick can reach the fastening. As you pull the gate towards you or push it from you with one hand, guide your horse round the front of it with the other. The horse must be well under control, and the reins taken up short, or you will not be able to manage it. Do not slacken them till you are well through the opening, or one of them may become caught upon the head of the gate.

When closing a gate which has to be pulled towards you, have your horse well in hand, so that he does not start off too soon and pull you out of the saddle, or your whip out of your hand.

It is not wise to use a hat-guard when riding a young and nervous horse, for, should the hat come off and dangle at

your back, the horse may very likely take fright and bolt. It is better, if the hat should come off, to let it fall free. With older or quiet horses, this matters little or nothing.

Care of Saddlery, etc.

See that grease of some kind be applied to all leather every few weeks, say, about every three or four. As soft soap soon makes the leather a dark colour, some use common kitchen soap mixed with either water or milk for cleaning, but dubbin (see page 26) should be put on after. The leather should be well polished, so as not to be left sticky. Bits, stirrups, etc., should be kept as bright as possible. They should be cleaned with wet silver-sand and polished with a leather.

If a side-saddle cannot at once be put upon a "dummy" when it is taken off the horse, it should be laid gently down with the pommels uppermost, as in Fig. 13.

Saddle-Drier.

The inside of a saddle should always be dried before it is put away. Many ladies' saddles have had their pommels very much scratched and spoiled by falling over when propped up before the fire to dry. A saddle-

drier, upon which the saddle may be fixed while drying, is a useful contrivance to prevent this. When dry, the inside of the saddle should be well beaten and brushed before it is put away.

CHAPTER VI.

Hunting and Jumping.

HUNTING should not be attempted by a rider until she has become thoroughly at home in the saddle in ordinary riding, and well practised in easy jumping. Unless the rider can keep her seat during the various paces of her horse, easily and without giving thought to herself, she will most likely soon find herself in difficulties in the hunting-field. Of course, she may have the good fortune to be mounted on a clever and reliable hunter, which is warranted to choose his own line across country and clear all the fences he attempts. But this kind of horse is not common, and one may on the other hand, have to ride a horse which needs guidance and has been accustomed to be thought for, requiring to be well kept in

hand, his paces regulated and his way picked out for him.

The rider cannot possibly keep a clear look-out as to the direction in which hounds are running if she has to attend to her position in the saddle and other numerous details connected with riding. She must give the greater part of her attention to the going of her horse and putting him at the fences which she considers him capable of taking. Many a good hunter, in the hands of an inexperienced rider, has fallen at a comparatively easy jump, entirely because he or she has baulked him by shifting the position in the saddle suddenly, or clutching convulsively at the reins.

Following a Leader.

During the first few days of riding to hounds, it is a good plan for the rider to follow someone on whose discretion she can rely, who never attempts anything rash, and whose horse's capabilities are about equal with those of her own mount. She will then learn what can only be got by experience—how fast to go, what sort of places to jump, and just when and how to take them.

If a leader is selected, do not follow

him too near — in fact, keep a good distance behind him. If you ride close up to him, it will be almost impossible not to jump on the top of him in the event of his horse falling. This kind of accident is liable to form one of the most painful memories of the hunting-field.

Jumping. In taking a leap, let your mount have plenty of head room—not by letting the reins run out through the fingers to any length, but by stretching out the arms low down while keeping a firm hold of the reins with both hands. If he requires still more room, let them slip a little way and then tighten the grip upon them. It is important to let him have as much head room as he requires, but not more. When taking a level jump, such as a ditch or brook, the body should maintain its ordinary position as much as possible ; but, in a rising jump, lean slightly back when the horse begins to rise, or you make get a knock in the chest from the pommel. Be careful to lean back soon enough, so as not to be taken by surprise by his sudden rise, and do not exaggerate the action. Straighten the body when going over, and

when landing on the other side of the fence again lean well back, so that the weight be not too much on his fore-legs.

Many teachers instruct their pupils to "*sit back*" when the horse is about to rise at a fence. This would seem to imply that they are to shift further back on the saddle, which would be a mistake. The weight should be thrown back, as just described, by the inclination of the shoulders, but the position of the seat is not in any way altered.

On the other hand, do not allow yourself to slip forward. The leaping-head is for the purpose of preventing this, and there should be an exceptionally tight pressure between it and the stirrup — the right leg very closely hooked round the pommel and the foot drawn back (see pages 17, 18).

Always let the hands feel the horse's mouth during a jump, especially when landing, or you will not know immediately whether your horse has alighted properly on his feet or whether he is going down upon his knees. Let him see what he is doing, and do not hamper him by holding the reins so tightly that he strains against them as he

lands, or you may find you have made him jump short and may thereby suffer an awkward spill.

Unless there is absolute danger ahead, never hesitate at a jump. It is better to take a rash leap than to change your mind suddenly at the last moment. Nine times out of ten, it is impossible to communicate your change of mind to the horse before he has begun his spring. Remember that when once he has "taken off" (begun his spring by leaving the ground with his fore-legs) you must let him go. If you hinder him or try to alter his course, and he attempts to hold back according to your wishes, in all probability he will jump short or come to grief in some way.

Falling. Should your horse fall, endeavour to keep cool. Don't lose presence of mind, or your troubles will very likely be doubled. It is sometimes best to let yourself come off clear away from the saddle, and sometimes better to cling as tightly as possible to it. This the rider must judge for herself according to the circumstances. Experience will soon teach her to decide on

the spur of the moment which is the best course to follow.

An accomplished rider learns to keep her seat as firmly, if necessary, as if she were part of the horse, even when he falls. She has also acquired the art of falling; and, if the horse is likely to roll over on his near side, she can come off clear of pommels and stirrup. A good deal of trouble may often be saved if the rider, when coming out of the saddle in this way, is able to keep hold of the end of the reins. The horse's mane will occasionally be found useful to catch hold of in the case of certain falls; therefore, it is not advisable to cut it quite short, as is done sometimes.

Lady's Seat v. Man's.

A lady when hunting is at a disadvantage compared with a man, in that she has both legs on one side of her horse. She cannot bring him straight to his fences so easily as the rider who can grip both his sides evenly between his knees, but on the other hand she has a much more secure seat.

General Advice.

Take your turn with others at a gap or good jumping place. Should there be more than one, it is best to make for that

which is the least crowded. Avoid jumping downwards into a hard road if possible ; but if there is no choice, be especially careful to keep your horse well in hand when landing, giving him a sense of support by the reins, so that he does not fall.

If hounds take a sharp turn to the left, take care that the horse does not swerve round too suddenly on alighting. Sometimes the side-saddle rider is taken unawares in this way, loses her balance, and is left hanging over on the off side, quite unable to right herself. This, however, can be avoided by forethought.

It is natural to wish to be well up to the front during a run. Keep as near as you are allowed, but, of course, never get in advance of, nor ride immediately behind, the hounds. It will be found best to keep to the edge of the crowd of riders instead of in the middle.

It is usually allowable to ride over grass land during the hunting season ; but, when crossing arable fields, the edges should be chosen as often as possible. Many riders are most inconsiderate in this matter. It is

impossible to avoid crossing newly-sown fields at times; therefore no absolute rule can be laid down; but, if riders would be more thoughtful and considerate, the hunt would be looked upon more favourably than it is by farmers.

When returning home after hunting, the horse should be allowed to go steadily, but be kept on the alert, as, being tired, he is not unlikely to stumble. The best pace is a slow trot. This, of course, is a much more tiring pace for a side-saddle rider than for a man, and she will do well to refrain from rising. Though not sitting down as closely as when cantering, she must take the same firm grip of the knees, but allow her body somewhat to follow what is called the "soldier's trot" —something between a rise and a jog. She must not let herself be bumped about, but merely allow her weight to be transferred from thigh to knee with each alternate step of the horse in an almost imperceptible manner.

If the mackintosh (see pages 30, 99) has been forgotten and the rider is unfortunate enough to get wet through, she is not likely to

come to much harm if she keeps moving. It is needless to say that on getting home all damp garments should be changed at once. A good plan is to drink something hot immediately, and then do the same again on going to bed.

If obliged to drive home or return by train in wet clothes, the best thing to do is to put on plenty of thick dry wraps over your wet ones. Many ladies who go a long distance to hunt make a rule always to take with them a bag of dry things, so as to change at an inn, if needful, before starting to go home.

Hunter's First Aid.

A very useful addition to the saddle or coat-pocket of your second horseman is a hunter's first aid (Fig. 28). This is a little leather case six inches long, but it contains two bandages, two sizes of ligature silk, needles and pins, two tubes of antiseptic powder, scissors, artery forceps, and cotton-wool. This can be used for either rider, horse, or hound, and may be the means of avoiding those evils which often result from a wound being left unattended for some hours.

CLOSED.

OPEN.

Fig. 28.—Hunter's First Aid.

CHAPTER VII.

Dress.

IT is needless to say that, if a lady wishes to look well on horseback, she must have a nicely-fitted habit; and, not only this, she must, if she wishes to ride comfortably and well, observe several points with regard to the cut of it.

Habit Bodice.

To begin with, the bodice needs to be made separately from the skirt. The style of the former varies from year to year in a much smaller degree than that of an ordinary dress; and, of course, in any case, much depends upon taste. It ought to be made as plainly as possible in every part. Some bodices button down the centre of the front, others over to the side, double-breasted. The neck is cut with collar lapels exactly like a man's coat.

The length of the bodice depends a good deal upon taste. It is cut much longer now than formerly, and may even reach to the knees when standing (Figs. 29c, 30). A bodice of this length looks very smart when in the saddle, though many ladies prefer to have it to reach only a few inches below the saddle (Figs. 1, 34). The fronts, which are usually cut square at the bottom, will lie straight down or slightly overlap when the wearer is standing upright; but, when in the saddle, they will lie one on each side of the right knee. The back, which is the same length as the front, is now always left open a few inches from the bottom.

The buttons down the front, which never come below the waist, should always be the same colour as the habit. They are of bone, and about the size of a shilling. Two are sometimes put on the outside of the cuff and at the back of the waist.

The sleeves seldom have more than a very little fulness on the shoulders; they are almost tight, except for this little gathering at the top.

Photo by] A B C [*Fall, 9, Baker Street, W.*

Fig. 29.—A.—Waterproof Jacket. B.—Bag containing waterproof jacket. C.—Habit buttoned up for walking (Front View).

If the reader will imagine a gentleman's frock-coat made to fit her figure, she will have a very fair idea of the simplicity of her riding-bodice. This part of the costume should be made to fit closely like a glove and without wrinkles. It should, however, be thoroughly comfortable, not too tight in the waist, and sufficiently broad across the chest to allow proper room for the expansion of the lungs, and the armholes cut out so that the arms are free to work easily in all directions. Care should be taken that the back of the neck is not so high as to cause the head to be poked forward. The rider will find it a good test for her future comfort, if, when fitting on her new bodice, she will try to use both hands at once for adjusting her back hair.

Skirt.

Few women nowadays are foolish enough to ride in the old fashioned round skirt, which has been the cause of many a sad accident, not only in the hunting field, but more often when the horse has fallen on some slippery road during a quiet ride.

There are numerous kinds of safety skirts made with the object of doing away with any

chance of the riders being "hung up" on the pommels in case of a fall; but unfortunately there are tailors who make so-called "safetys" which are as dangerous as the old fashioned skirt, viz.: those which are not sufficiently cut away beneath the rider's legs. Only those which have the side nearest the saddle (the right side) entirely cut away (see Fig. 31), are at all safe, for that part of the cloth which in an old fashioned habit was beneath the knees, and shaped to fit over the pommels, is the part by which the rider is most likely to be caught in the event of her being thrown, The cloth should be so cut away, that when the knees leave the pommels, in whatever direction the rider may fall, the habit comes clear away with her. Some which have the appearance of being cut away sufficiently are not really so, and the rider is liable to be hung up by the curved edge of the cloth becoming caught on the pommel or leaping-head.

The skirts of to-day are so varied and numerous that it is seldom two are seen to be cut alike, and each tailor declares that his is the best and safest that it is possible to

Photo by] [*Fall, 9, Baker Street, W.*

Fig. 30.—Habit buttoned up for walking (Back View).

obtain. The larger number of those now made have a narrow legging or band which fastens round the right knee when in the saddle. This fastens in various ways—some on the underside, with the right hand, and some have to be done through the placket-hole with the left hand. In some cases this is separate from the breeches, and in others buttoned on to them. I do not consider a skirt of this type to be very safe. It is especially unsafe when the cloth round the knee becomes stretched. Safety can only be insured if the skirt be taken away from beneath the upper part of the right leg from knee to thigh-bone, and also from the entire seat, so that the rider does not sit upon *any* part of it.

It is obvious that, in choosing a skirt, safety should be of the first importance, and in the second place convenience should be taken into account. The skirts in which these two requisites are combined naturally stand far above all those in the making of which only one of the two has been thought of. There are, I am glad to say, several which are made on this principle. It will be of help to the

reader, therefore, to have a description of one of them :—

In the Busvine Convertible Apron Skirt both are taken equally into consideration ; yet the device is simple. The cloth is cut out all the way round where the body meets the saddle, viz., the whole way from the back of the left leg, round the seat as far as the knee of the right leg, beneath the centre of which it may be seen to wrap under. It is adjusted when the rider is mounted by the buttoning down of the edge of the cut away cloth on to the breeches by four buttons which lie on the outside edge of the rider's right leg. She may, if the horse be restive, start with them undone without any inconvenience, and button them as she goes along.

Having now dealt with the question of safety, I come to the question of convenience. The skirt should be cut in such a manner that the cloth will button across and hide what would otherwise be an unsightly opening at the back when off the saddle. This should be done as easily and with as little loss of time as possible. Many skirts have a double adjustment behind which takes up much time and

Photo by] [*Spalding.*

Fig 31.—Skirt, showing how the cloth is cut away. (Imaginary position—in the saddle.)

trouble on dismounting, usually needing both hands at once to discover the various buttons and loops which are hidden beneath the coat-tails. In the above skirt it will be seen that the right side of the cloth wraps so far over the left that when a single button has been fastened (which can be done with one hand) the costume is perfectly suitable for walking (Figs. 29c, 30).

For those ladies who like to have their skirt and breeches made as one garment the Improved Zenith Skirt is the best thing of the kind. This is cut on something the same plan, but the cloth is stitched into the inner seam of the left leg of the breeches as far as the knee, and on the right side the two garments are stitched together down the hip as far as the saddle. From there to knee it is buttoned in much the same manner as the above. This skirt for walking is also made to fasten up with one button only.

It is perhaps needless to say that all fastenings for the adjustment of the skirt when the rider is in the saddle, should be undone before dismounting.

Skirts are now made much shorter than

formerly. The best and most usual length is that in which the left side just covers the stirrup, barely hiding the rider's foot. The hem at the bottom should on no account be stitched by machine. Some habit-makers, for safety, leave the edge raw. The smarter way is to have it turned up once and hemmed by hand, lightly but firmly, not taking the stitches through, the hem being about three inches in depth.

There should be some little mark, in the shape of a few stitches of white cotton, on the waist band, so that the centre of the skirt is easily found, for should it be put on even slightly twisted, it will not be easy to get it straight when in the saddle. The right knee should fit exactly into the curve of cloth made for it. The placket-hole comes to the left side, just behind the hip, and in this is inserted a pocket unseen from without.

Foot Loops.

It is always found necessary to have stitched on the inside of the right side of the skirt, one, and sometimes two, elastic loops, one of which is put over the right toe and the other the left heel, after the rider is in position. These loops, if put on in the

proper places, are often of great use in keeping the skirt well in place; for some skirts are apt to work up and become uncomfortable. Their position can only be determined when the rider is in the saddle. The loop from the right toe should be stitched a couple of inches above and behind the ankle of the right foot: that for the left heel (which is not always necessary) a couple of inches above the left foot. These loops should be stitched tightly to a piece of strong lining, about four or five inches square, and this sewn firmly to the skirt. They should not be made so long that they are liable to come off the foot during the ride, yet they should be tight enough to keep the skirt in place. They are generally of flat elastic about three-fourths of an inch broad. For hunting, it is well to have the Nicoll patent spring foot-straps in the place of these; for the foot is more quickly freed in case the horse falls and the rider has to scramble off her saddle as quickly as possible. They are made with elastic, but with a metal clasp attached, and so arranged that, when the clasp is shut and the toe is put through

the loop, the skirt is held down as with an ordinary elastic; but, when any more severe strain is put upon them, the spring opens and the foot is free. The writer has used the above patent foot-straps during several years for hunting and rough riding, and has never found them fail to act properly. They can be bought separately and stitched on to any skirt.

Material and Colour of Habit.

The skirt should be made of a thick close cloth if it is to hang well and be of service in the hunting field. A cloth known as "triple Melton" is excellent for hard wear. When this very thick material is used for the skirt, it is usual to have the bodice made of a rather thinner kind of the same cloth; otherwise, it is apt to be clumsy.

Fashionable habits are often made either in black or in very dark grey. Dark greens, browns, and blues are occasionally seen in the Park; but they are rare. A waistcoat of scarlet or yellow cloth is sometimes worn, a narrow rim of it showing at the neck, and occasionally a point at the waist; but this is not now so fashionable as it was a few years ago. For hunting, some

ladies like to ride "in pink." In this case, the bodice only is made entirely of scarlet cloth, and usually has brass buttons.

Mackintosh.

As the covert coat seems to be going out of fashion, a mackintosh is a very great addition to comfort in wet weather. Many of those sold for ladies are far too heavy and bulky to be of much practical service. The most useful kind is a jacket of thin fawn-coloured waterproof (Fig. 29A), made just long enough to cover the bodice and button over the right knee. This can be carried with little or no trouble in a small khaki bag (Fig. 29B) on the off-side of the saddle, the whole thing weighing no more than 1 lb. 7 oz.

Holland Coat.

For riding during hot weather, a jacket of white drill or brown holland may be worn; this should be long enough to reach quite to the saddle. There must of course be no fulness at the shoulders; it may, in fact, be cut much the same as a covert-coat for walking. A white sailor hat with black band is the most suitable head-gear when this coat is worn.

Hat.

We are threatened with a return of the high silk hat which was so much in vogue some

time ago, but which has not been seen much of late years. As yet, the round bowler (Fig. 29) is in high favour. It should be either black or the colour of the habit. In summer, a sailor hat is often worn in the Park. Either white or black may be worn, but always with a black band. All riding hats ought to be well-fitting, though not uncomfortably tight on the forehead, and fastened with a firm flat piece of elastic round beneath the hair — never, on any account, with pins. The hat should never be worn tilted back, as it gives the rider a jaunty appearance, but well forward on the forehead. The shape varies very slightly from one season to another.

Hat-guard. For hunting, a strong hat-guard (see page 77) is a useful addition, as a good run may be spoilt by a halt to recover a lost hat.

Hair. As many ladies find difficulty in keeping up the hair it is perhaps well to offer a word of advice on the subject. The hair will be found to keep in place best when it is twisted or plaited very firmly into a knot rather low down at the back of the head. Fasten it firmly

all up together close to the head in the position required for the knot; then divide into two or three strands; twist each of these round upon themselves before coiling them round the centre; turn in the end of each piece when coiled, and fasten securely with several pins. A fine hair-net can be put over the hair if preferred, but this is useless unless it has threaded into it a piece of strong, fine, round elastic.

Veil.

A veil may be worn if desired. This must be put on over the brim of the hat. It should be black, and with the short ends twisted and tied firmly at the back, so that they cannot come out and flap about.

Gloves.

Tan-coloured gloves look the most businesslike for riding, and are most serviceable when made of some good, strong, pliable leather. They should never be tight, but should allow full use of the fingers. Nothing looks more absurd than to see a rider's hands pinched up in a tight pair of gloves. I have never found better or more durable gloves than a special make of stout reindeer, which is sometimes obtainable at a very low price. They are always made

with a three-cornered piece of leather stitched in between and at the base of each finger, thereby preventing the split which is so often made by the reins between the fingers of ordinary gloves. Being porous they are very suitable for warm weather. In cold or wet weather, white knitted wool or cotton gloves are most usually worn. The most serviceable kind are those of coarse cotton, made specially for riding, and when preferred they can have a wool lining threaded inside them, thus adding to the warmth, and making little or no difference to the washing.

Corsets. Comfortable corsets are necessary to insure good and graceful riding. They should be loose enough to give plenty of play to the muscles encased in them. Long busks in the front will be found a great disadvantage. Roughly speaking, twelve inches should be quite long enough for a tall, long-waisted lady : for a shorter person, eleven or ten. It will be found a good plan to lace up the back of the corset with an elastic cord, instead of the ordinary cotton or silk one.

The most comfortable under-garment for

riding, as for cycling, is a closely-woven stockinette combination, buttoned high at the back. Those made of natural wool are the most satisfactory for winter wear. Silk is very comfortable for ordinary riding. Under-Garment.

Long and fairly thick stockings will be found to be the best; they should be pulled well up over the combinations, and fastened by suspenders from the waist. It is, of course, of very great importance that all these garments should be closely-fitting. It is better that they should be rather too tight than too loose, the object being to avoid creases. Stockings.

Over the combinations, instead of the old-fashioned trousers, a pair of tailor-made breeches (Fig. 5) is now usually worn. These are obtainable from all good habit-makers, and can be had in a thick or thin elastic cloth, but the thick are best. The buttons should be on the outside of each leg, and about an inch from the front; if they are at the side, they are apt to be uncomfortable beneath the right calf. This garment requires careful cutting and making; for, although the cloth at the left knee may be loose, that round the right should fit closely. It is Breeches.

essential that the breeches be entirely comfortable. For obvious reasons, they cannot be fitted so easily as the rest of the costume, and the tailor is obliged to make them roughly in the first instance as best he can, and then trust to the purchaser to explain to him in what respects they are not comfortable. Much discomfort will be avoided if this is done unreservedly, and the wearer need not scruple to have them altered again and again, until they are a perfect fit. There should be no superfluous fulness, and yet they should not be too tight or drag in any part.

In place of these, many ladies wear a pair of black stockinette knickers (Fig. 4), made especially for riding, but the skirt cannot be buttoned so firmly on to them as on to those made of cloth. These can be had in several thicknesses, and should be long enough almost to cover the calf of the leg. They should be drawn carefully up over the stockings and combinations, for a "ruck" in any of these garments will rub, and cause a sore very quickly, unless the skin be exceptionally hardened.

Those who have tender skin will do well to have padding stitched in the breeches, under the right knee, where the pommel touches, and also above the left, where the leaping-head presses.

Top boots (Fig. 4), of either calf or patent leather, are usually worn; but, for those who do not like them, thin leather or cloth gaiters (Fig. 5) may be used over ordinary walking shoes when not hunting—or elastic buttonless gaiters, which have every appearance of black cloth. These can be had made almost any length. All boots and gaiters should be black, or the feet will be very conspicuous, for it is impossible to avoid the left foot being seen occasionally when trotting or cantering. They should be made of soft pliable leather, and not too heavy. High heels should not be worn, as they are liable to cause a twisted ankle when dismounting. **Boots.**

All riding boots should be larger and looser than those for walking. The muscles must have plenty of play, and unless the boots are thoroughly easy and comfortable, especially at the insteps, the rider will very soon experience great discomfort. A pair of

boot-hooks is usually sold for pulling them on, but no boots made for side-saddle riding should be so tight that they cannot be pulled on by the fingers after they have been worn comfortable. If the right boot seems liable to sag, a narrow strap may be put through the little tab (which will be found inside the top at the back) and buckled round the leg.

Shirt and Cuffs. Many ladies wear beneath the habit bodice a plain cotton shirt, with stiff cuffs attached. This garment should have only a low band at the neck, the same as a man's shirt, so that the stock-tie may be fastened securely to it. When loose cuffs are worn, two small pearl buttons should be sewn inside the sleeve, so that the spare studholes of the cuffs may be fastened on to them. In this way they may be always kept in position. They should never be pinned.

Pins. Any pins used in the costume should be safety-pins. It is well to carry a couple of these in the pocket in case of accident.

Stock-tie. The most popular neck gear of late years is the stock, which is a combination of collar and tie. There are several varieties of it, but that preferred by the writer is simply cut

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A
B
C

Fig. 32.—Stock-tie. First three positions.

and in one piece, the middle or collar part being made so that the customary celluloid slip can be pushed in, and removed for washing. It will be noticed that on one side of this stock a little incision is made, in order that the other side may lie in the opening, and so prevent any clumsiness at the back when one side is crossed over the other. In order to assist the novice to follow the directions, a safety pin is shown in the illustration, fastened to the shorter of the two ends. Fasten the centre of the collar piece on to the stud (or better still a button) at the front of the shirt (Fig. 32A); throw the ends back over the shoulders; cross and button them both on the stud at the back, so that they lie locked together by the before mentioned opening, then bring the ends round again to the front and cross left over right (Fig. 32B). Keep the under (or pin end) held down on the chest while the uppermost is bent inwards and tucked up under the other so that it comes out at the centre of the neck forming an ordinary single knot (Fig. 32C). The ends should be pulled perpendicularly till as

tight as required, and then the top one allowed to fall over, straight down on the top of the other. This forms the centre of the tie, and should be held firmly to the neck with the fingers of the left hand while its end be bent inwards and laid loosely on the right shoulder, the lower (or pin end) may then be swung over a little towards the right arm, then bent outwards, and pushed through the loop made for it (Fig. 33D). We shall now have the ends lying one over each shoulder. In Fig. 33E be careful to note the essential point for the set of the tie, which is that although both ends must be kept *quite flat* (neither crushed nor rucked up as they go through) each of them must exactly occupy the space under the knot, leaving no room at the four outside corners. Next the ends may each be bent over to the front so that they lie flat across one another, forming a V a few inches below the chin.

A gold safety pin is often worn in the centre where the ends cross, but if the tie is well made and pressed flat, an ordinary safety pin fixing the ends of the tie down to the shirt will be sufficient (Fig. 33F).

Photos by] [*Fall, 9, Baker Street, W.*

D
E
F

Fig. 33.—Stock-tie. Last three positions.

The stock is usually made of shirting, or some white material of the kind. Some prefer silk, but nothing keeps its colour so well as cotton shirting. A little starch should always be put in when washed.

Children.

There is no necessity for small children to wear a riding habit. For them, an ordinary dress skirt, pleated at the waist and falling just below the knee, something like a kilt, will be found very suitable. Over this a neat little Norfolk jacket or sailor blouse may be worn. The knickerbockers, which should be made of the same material as the rest of the costume (preferably of navy blue serge), should not be gathered with elastic at the knee as for walking, but brought below it and narrowed down from the fulness above into a broad shaped band or piece of cloth, buttoning up the calf of the leg like gentlemen's shooting knickerbockers. If this is carefully made and the stocking fastened well up, there will be no trouble from over-fulness beneath the knees. Gaiters should be worn to complete the smartness of this costume; but, unless the buttons are flat and small, they may hurt the ankle or calf of the right leg.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mounting and Dismounting.

Mounting with Groom.

WHEN ready to mount, stand by the saddle on the near side of the horse, close up against him, facing his head. With the right hand, take hold of the snaffle rein loosely, and of the whip, pointing it downwards to keep it out of sight of the horse, in order to prevent his taking fright, as is sometimes the case when it is handled carelessly. Place the hand upon the pommel. With the left hand, find the loop which fastens up the back of the skirt, (unless you have a skirt which requires both hands to unfasten it, in which case this must be done before taking up the reins). Bend the left knee and put the toe into the hand or hands of the attendant, who should be standing exactly in front of and facing you in a stooping position (Fig. 34).

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Fig. 34.—Ready to be mounted.

When quite ready to spring into the saddle, always count "one," "two," "three" and while saying "three" straighten the left leg and spring with the toe of the right foot from the ground. At the same moment, let go the unbuttoned skirt, leaving the left arm hanging straight down. If the groom be careful to lift you by raising himself erect, and your left leg becomes straightened at the exact moment in which you say "three," and not before, you will find yourself seated on the saddle on your right side almost instantaneously.

A good deal of practice will often be required, both on the part of the attendant and the rider, to ensure that the latter does not find herself struggling midway between the saddle and the ground, looking very foolish. The important points for the attendant to remember are—that he must stand close up to the horse, and that he must not push up until he feels that the lady's leg is *quite straight*, but must do so at the exact moment it becomes so. She, on her part, must not forget to spring up from the ground from the right toe *at the same time*

that she straightens the left leg firmly and stiffly.

Should there be no second groom to stand at the horse's head while you are being mounted, always insist that the left arm of the man be put through the curb rein as it lies loosely on the horse's neck (Fig. 34). In the event of the horse starting forward before the rider is properly in the saddle, the man may then be able to prevent what might easily be a most serious accident.

On reaching the saddle, the reins and whip must be retained in the right hand while the knee is immediately put over the pommel. The groom should then put the toe in the stirrup, and while this is done the rider should see that the habit wraps properly round her right leg and her knee fits into the curve of the cloth made for it. The elastic loop should then be found by the man and put round and on to the right toe. The reins may then be transferred into the left hand, and any other necessary fastenings, according to the make of the skirt, can be done while the stirrup is adjusted to the correct length.

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Fig. 35.—Mounting alone.

Mounting alone.

It is exceedingly useful for all ladies to be able to mount without help. Obviously this is absolutely necessary when riding alone or when hunting. In the case of the whip or handkerchief being dropped when riding alone in the country, where frequently no one is in sight, the rider is forced to dismount; and, if unable to get up again from the ground, may have to lead her horse some distance before finding a stone or tree-stump high enough to enable her to mount.

Assuming the horse has been trained to stand still and a lady wishes to mount alone, she must place herself close up to the near side of the saddle, facing it (Fig. 35). After releasing the fastening which holds up the skirt, she must take the reins in the left hand (as in Fig. 24), and put it on the saddle in front of the pommel; or, if preferred, grasp a piece of the mane, twisting it firmly round the fingers. Raise the left leg, and put the toe into the stirrup, which may be held steady by the hand for a moment, if needful. Then put the right hand, containing the whip, on the back of the saddle, and a spring from the toe on the ground, combined with the pressure of

the hands and a slight turn towards the front, will bring the body into the saddle in the same position as when mounted by a groom. It should be noted however, that, when springing from the ground, the hands should be pressed downwards upon the saddle, in the same manner as if intending to vault. On no account should the rider pull herself up with them, or the saddle will be displaced, even when girthed tightly. When mounted, the reins should be taken in the right hand, so that the left may be free to arrange the skirt.

A difficulty which frequently arises when a short lady wishes to mount herself on a tall horse is that she cannot raise her foot high enough from the ground to put it into the stirrup. Although it may be difficult at first to lift the foot sufficiently high, a few calisthenic exercises and a little practice will overcome this, unless the horse is exceptionally tall. In this case, a good plan is to lengthen the stirrup-leather a few holes, and shorten it again to the proper length when mounted. Some saddlers sell a strip of strong webbing made with a loop at each

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Fig. 36.—Dismounting, with Groom.

end. One loop may be hung on the pommel and the toe put in the other, to enable the rider to mount herself. The object of this is to save her the trouble of altering the stirrup leather. The webbing is easily put away in the saddle-pocket when she has mounted.

Dismounting with Groom.

It is seldom that a lady is seen to dismount gracefully, for few seem to think it of consequence how they get out of the saddle. The groom should stand at her side, facing her, with his left hand on the rein of her horse, his right free to steady her as she dismounts. After the foot has been freed from the stirrup and footloops, the rider must lift the knee from the pommel, taking care that the skirt is quite free also, drop the reins, use the right hand (containing the whip held flat in the palm) to hold her skirt, and allow the man to take hold of her left arm just beneath the elbow (Fig. 36). In this way she may slide easily to the ground quite clear away from her horse. To avoid showing more than necessary of the opening at the back of the skirt, the manner of fastening it up after dismounting which is at the same time the least trouble, is to find

(after having removed the knee from the pommel) the little loop or button hole in the cloth beneath it. If the right forefinger be put through this before she slides down, she will find no trouble in fastening it after reaching the ground. These remarks of course do not apply to those who are unfortunate enough to have a skirt with many or complicated fastenings.

Dismounting alone.

If wishing to dismount alone, after freeing the foot and knee as described, the rider should see that her right hand, containing the reins and whip, is placed on the base of the pommel: then, taking up the fulness of the skirt with the left, she can slip gracefully down, allowing the hand to remain on the pommel, until the feet touch the ground. In case of the rider being of very small stature, a better plan is for her to put her hand on the leaping-head when slipping down, as her arm will then not be stretched up so far on her reaching the ground. She is advised to keep as erect as possible when leaving the saddle, lest she should receive a blow on the chest from the pommel or leaping-head.

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